

to see that there were two sides to the religious question. Laymen who were not Lollards wrote satires against the Bishops about the sale of pardons and of absolution, against the friars for their immorality, and against the clergy generally for the simony and hypocrisy of 'pope-holy priests full of presumption.' These and other signs were already alarming the lovers of the Church, who saw symptoms of a lay revolt. We find a churchman appealing to Henry the Sixth to defend the clergy against the ill-will of the lords and knights, who were certainly not Lollards at that time.¹ The great mass of Englishmen, who were still hostile or indifferent to the new doctrine, were compelled to realise that there existed other forms of religion besides the regular mediaeval Christianity, a truth horrible and appalling until it became customary. Thus the ideas of Luther and Latimer did not come to Englishmen in all the shocking violence of novelty, since here the doctrines of Lollardry had been common talk ever since 1380. The doctrinal and ritual reformation of religion in England was not a work of the sixteenth century alone. The difference between the religious beliefs of an average layman at the time of the Gunpowder Plot and those of his ancestor in the age of Crecy, was so profound that the change cannot have been wrought in a generation, still less by a Court intrigue. The English mind moves slowly, cautiously, and often silently. The movement in regard to forms of religion began with Wycliffe, if it began no earlier, and reached its full height perhaps not a hundred years ago. England was not converted from Germany; she changed her own opinion, and had begun that process long before Wittenberg or Geneva became famous in theological controversy. If we take a general view of our religious history, we must hold that English Protestantism had a gradual and mainly regular growth.

Apart from questions of doctrine and ritual, the importance of Lollardry was great in formulating the rebellion of the laity. That rebellion was directed against the attempt of the Church to keep men in subordination to the priest, after the time when higher developments had become possible. H

¹ *Pol. Poems*, ii. 237 and 248-51.